

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 91

By Finney R.

A RESOLUTION urging the Comptroller of the Treasury to study current alcohol and drug laws.

WHEREAS, substance use and abuse have been established as major contributing factors to numerous health and social problems Tennesseans face, including HIV/AIDS, cancer, child abuse and neglect, infant mortality, crime, domestic violence, teen pregnancy, fetal alcohol syndrome, highway safety, poverty, and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, in September 2006, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reported the results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). Some of its findings include:

- An estimated 22.2 million persons (9.1 percent of the population aged 12 or older) were classified with substance dependence or abuse in the past year based on criteria specified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition (DSM-IV). Of these, 3.3 million were dependent on or abused illicit drugs but not alcohol, and 15.4 million were dependent on or abused alcohol but not illicit drugs.
- There were 3.9 million persons aged 12 or older (1.6 percent of the population) who received some kind of treatment for a problem related to the use of alcohol or illicit drugs in 2005.
- In 2005, 23.2 million persons aged 12 or older needed treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol abuse problem (9.5 percent of the population aged 12 or older). Of these, 2.3 million received treatment at a specialty facility, but 20.9 million persons (8.6 percent of the population aged 12 or older) who needed treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol use problem did not receive treatment at a specialty substance abuse facility in the past year.

- Among pregnant women aged 15 to 44 years, 3.9 percent reported using illicit drugs in the past month based on combined 2004 and 2005 NSDUH data.
- Among pregnant women aged 15 to 44 years, an estimated 12.1 percent reported current alcohol use and 3.9 percent reported binge drinking. Heavy alcohol use was relatively rare (0.7 percent) among pregnant women; and

WHEREAS, the 2003 and 2004 NSDUHs for Tennessee estimated that 331,000 Tennesseans reported illicit drug use, and 739,000 reported binge drinking in the past month. Further, 125,000 Tennesseans need but do not receive treatment for illicit drug use, and 296,000 Tennesseans need but do not receive treatment for alcohol use; and

WHEREAS, there were a reported 11,730 hospital admissions for treatment of abuse of alcohol and drugs in 2005 in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, recognizing and treating alcohol and drug problems have changed dramatically since practices mandated by the model language of the 1971 Uniform Alcoholism and Intoxication Treatment Act were issued; and

WHEREAS, the State needs to consistently evaluate its efforts to address a societal problem that exacts such a heavy toll on the health and well-being of Tennesseans and ensure development of an effective and comprehensive strategy that strengthens the current organization and delivery systems; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the members of this General Assembly hereby urge the Comptroller of the Treasury to:

(1) Initiate a comprehensive analysis of Tennessee's existing statutes addressing prevention, treatment, and recovery services of alcohol and drug use in order to ensure that state laws governing prevention and treatment funding programs reflect the best practices in addressing the diseases.

(2) Review the existing statutes to ensure that state agencies have appropriate authority to coordinate services around the needs of individuals and families with alcohol, drug, and other addictions.

(3) Identify existing statutes that may inhibit recovery and reentry into society for individuals with alcohol and drug disorders and convictions.

(4) Review sentencing laws to ensure that convicted persons receive proper treatment before and after release.

(5) Review existing statutes regulating alcohol consumption and sales to ensure the appropriate balance between the availability of alcoholic beverages with the need to protect the public's health and safety.

(6) Review the State's Uniform Accident and Sickness Policy Provision statute to determine if the statutory authorization has been or could become an impediment to identifying and referring individuals for treatment with alcohol and substance use problems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Comptroller is instructed to complete its review and to report back to the respective leaders of the Senate and House with recommendations, if any, on suggested changes no later than December 1, 2008.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Comptroller of the Treasury.